
William Rickards

I was born in the family home in North Fremantle, November 30, 1927. I went to the North Fremantle State School then Fremantle Boys, which was later relocated away from the Port. In the early years of the war we entertained visiting merchant seamen (engineers in particular) at home with singsongs around the piano. My father, who was a partner in the Fremantle Foundry, a heavy engineering and ship repair firm, observed the incoming ships from our home and then would meet the ship to ascertain if any repairs were required.

In January 1943 at the age of 14 years I commenced my apprenticeship at the Fremantle Foundry. For the next two years and after the war I worked on more ships in the port than I can remember. For instance the –

- S. S. Chung King (escaped from Singapore)
- M. V. Ondina (torpedoed in the Indian Ocean)
- S. S. Panamanian (caught fire in Fremantle)
- M. V. Tai-ping-yang (oil tanker with main engine breakdown)
- M. V. Noravind (oil tanker with main engine breakdown)
- M. V. Morby (freighter with main engine breakdown)
- M. V. Westmore (freighter with main engine breakdown)

And many, many more all loaded with machinery, tanks and planes for the Pacific. The hours of work were often around the clock.